

EVANGELINE



LONGFELLOW



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Merry Christmas to
Miss Crowell from
her S. S. Class.

Dec. 25, 1911

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Longfellow, H
Evangeline.

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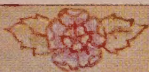
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EVANGELINE.





In the odorous air of the orchard
..... was spread the feast
of betrothal.



Evangeline

A Tale of Acadie

by

Henry Wadsworth
Longfellow. 1807-1882



Illustrated by

Arthur Dixon.

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EVANGELINE.

In 1713, Acadia, or, as it is now named, Nova Scotia, was ceded to Great Britain by the French. Some time after, war having again broken out between the French and British in Canada, the Acadians were accused of having assisted the French, and the British Government ordered them to be removed from their homes, and dispersed throughout the other colonies, at a distance from their much-loved land. The poem is descriptive of the fate of some of the persons involved in these calamitous proceedings.

Loud from its rocky caverns,
the deep-voiced neighboring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate
answers the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval;
but where are the hearts that beneath it
Leaped like the roe, when he hears
in the woodland the voice of the huntsman?
Where is the thatch-roofed village,
the home of Acadian farmers,—
Men whose lives glided on like rivers
that water the woodlands,
Darkened by shadows of earth,
but reflecting an image of heaven?
Waste are those pleasant farms,
and the farmers for ever departed!
Scattered like dust and leaves,
when the mighty blasts of October
Seize them, and whirl them aloft,
and sprinkle them far o'er the ocean.
Naught but tradition remains
of the beautiful village of Grand-Pré

Ye who believe in affection
 that hopes, and endures, and is patient,
Ye who believe in the beauty
 and strength of woman's devotion,
List to the mournful tradition
 still sung by the pines of the forest;
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie,
 home of the happy.



PART THE FIRST.

I.

IN the Acadian land,
 on the shores of the Basin of Minas,
Distant, secluded, still,
 the little village of Grand-Pré
Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows
 stretched to the eastward,
Giving the village its name,
 and pasture to flocks without number.
Dikes, that the hands of the farmers
 had raised with labor incessant,
Shut out the turbulent tides;
 but at stated seasons the flood-gates
Opened, and welcomed the sea
 to wander at will o'er the meadows.
West and south there were fields of flax,
 and orchards and cornfields
Spreading afar and unfenced o'er
 the plain; and away to the northward

Blomidon rose, and the forests old,
and aloft on the mountains
Sea-fogs pitched their tents,
and mists from the mighty Atlantic
Looked on the happy valley,
but ne'er from their station descended.
There, in the midst of its farms
reposed the Acadian village.
Strongly built were the houses,
with frames of oak and of chestnut,
Such as the peasants of Normandy built
in the reign of the Henries
Thatched were the roofs, with dormer
windows; and gables projecting
Over the basement below
protected and shaded the doorway.
There in the tranquil evenings of summer,
when brightly the sunset
Lighted the village street,
and gilded the vanes on the chimneys,
Matrons and maidens sat
in snow-white caps and in kirtles
Scarlet and blue and green,
with distaffs spinning the golden

Flax for the gossiping looms,
 whose noisy shuttles within doors
Mingled their sound with the whir of
 the wheels and the songs of the maidens.
Solemnly down the street came
 the parish priest, and the children
Paused in their play to kiss the hand
 he extended to bless them.
Reverend walked he among them;
 and up rose matrons and maidens,
Hailing his slow approach
 with words of affectionate welcome.
Then came the laborers home
 from the field, and serenely the sun sank
Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed.
 Anon from the belfry
Softly the Angelus sounded,
 and over the roofs of the village
Columns of pale blue smoke,
 like clouds of incense ascending,
Rose from a hundred hearths,
 the homes of peace and contentment.
Thus dwelt together in love
 these simple Acadian farmers,—

Dwelt in the love of God and of man.

Alike were they free from
Fear, that reigns with the tyrant,
and envy, the vice of republics.
Neither locks had they to their doors,
nor bars to their windows;
But their dwellings were open as day
and the hearts of the owners;
There the richest was poor,
and the poorest lived in abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village,
and nearer the Basin of Minas,
Benedict Bellefontaine,
the wealthiest farmer of Grand-Pré,
Dwelt on his goodly acres;
and with him, directing his household,
Gentle Evangeline lived, his child,
and the pride of the village.

Stalworth and stately in form
was the man of seventy winters;

Hearty and hale was he, an oak
that is covered with snow-flakes;
White as the snow were his locks,
and his cheeks as brown as the oak-leaves.



Fair was she to behold,
that maiden of seventeen summers,
Black were her eyes as the berry that grows
on the thorn by the wayside,
Black, yet how softly they gleamed
beneath the brown shade of her tresses

Sweet was her breath as the breath
 of kine that feed in the meadows.
When in the harvest heat she bore
 to the reapers at noontide
Flagons of home-brewed ale,
 ah! fair in sooth was the maiden.
Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn,
 while the bell from its turret
Sprinkled with holy sounds the air,
 as the priest with his hyssop
Sprinkles the congregation,
 and scatters blessings upon them,
Down the long street she passed,
 with her chaplet of beads and her missal,
Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle
 of blue, and the earrings,
Brought in the olden time from France,
 and since, as an heirloom,
Handed down from mother to child,
 through long generations.
But a celestial brightness—
 a more ethereal beauty—
Shone on her face and encircled
 her form, when, after confession,

Homeward serenely she walked
with God's benediction upon her.
When she had passed, it seemed like
the ceasing of exquisite music.



Firmly builded with rafters of oak,
the house of the farmer
Stood on the side of a hill
commanding the sea; and a shady



Down the long street she passed.

Sycamore grew by the door,
with a woodbine wreathing around it.
Rudely carved was the porch,
with seats beneath; and a footpath



Led through an orchard wide,
and disappeared in the meadow.
Under the sycamore-tree were hives
overhung by a penthouse,

Such as the traveller sees
in regions remote by the road-side,
Built o'er a box for the poor,
or the blessed image of Mary.
Farther down, on the slope of the hill,
was the well with its moss-grown
Bucket, fastened with iron,
and near it a trough for the horses.
Shielding the house from storms, on the
north, were the barns and the farm-yard.
There stood the broad-wheeled wains
and the antique ploughs and the harrows;
There were the folds for the sheep;
and there, in his feathered seraglio,
Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed
the cock, with the selfsame
Voice that in ages of old
had startled the penitent Peter.
Bursting with hay were the barns,
themselves a village. In each one
Far o'er the gable projected a roof
of thatch; and a staircase,
Under the sheltering eaves,
led up to the odorous corn-loft.

There too the dove-cot stood,
 with its meek and innocent inmates
Murmuring ever of love;
 while above in the variant breezes
Numberless noisy weathercocks
 rattled and sang of mutation.

Thus, at peace with God and the world,
 the farmer of Grand-Pré
Lived on his sunny farm,
 and Evangeline governed his household.
Many a youth, as he knelt in the church
 and opened his missal,
Fixed his eyes upon her,
 as the saint of his deepest devotion;
Happy was he who might touch her hand
 or the hem of her garment!
Many a suitor came to her door,
 by the darkness befriended,
And, as he knocked and waited to hear
 the sound of her footsteps,
Knew not which beat the louder,
 his heart or the knocker of iron;

But when the hymn was sung,
 and the daily lesson completed,
Swiftly they hurried away
 to the forge of Basil the blacksmith.



There at the door they stood,
 with wondering eyes, to behold him
Take in his leathern lap the hoof
 of the horse as a plaything,
Nailing the shoe in its place;
 while near him the tire of the cart-wheel

Lay like a fiery snake,
 coiled round in a circle of cinders.
Oft on autumnal eves,
 when without in the gathering darkness
Bursting with light seemed the smithy,
 through every cranny and crevice,
Warm by the forge within
 they watched the laboring bellows,
And as its panting ceased,
 and the sparks expired in the ashes,
Merrily laughed, and said
 they were nuns going into the chapel.
Oft on sledges in winter,
 as swift as the swoop of the eagle,
Down the hill-side bounding,
 they glided away o'er the meadow.
Oft in the barns they climbed
 to the populous nests on the rafters,
Seeking with eager eyes that
 wondrous stone, which the swallow
Brings from the shore of the sea
 to restore the sight of its fledglings;
Lucky was he who found that stone
 in the nest of the swallow!

Thus passed a few swift years,
and they no longer were children.
He was a valiant youth, and his face,
like the face of the morning,
Gladdened the earth with its light,
and ripened thought into action.
She was a woman now,
with the heart and hopes of a woman.
"Sunshine of Saint Eulalie" was
she called; for that was the sunshine
Which, as the farmers believed,
would load their orchards with apples.
She, too, would bring to her husband's house
delight and abundance,
Filling it full of love
and the ruddy faces of children.



II.

Now had the season returned,
 when the nights grow colder and longer,
And the retreating sun
 the sign of the Scorpion enters.
Birds of passage sailed through
 the leaden air, from the ice-bound,
Desolate northern bays
 to the shores of tropical islands.
Harvests were gathered in;
 and wild with the winds of September
Wrestled the trees of the forest,
 as Jacob of old with the angel.
All the signs foretold
 a winter long and inclement.
Bees, with prophetic instinct of want,
 had hoarded their honey
Till the hives overflowed;
 and the Indian hunters asserted
Cold would the winter be,
 for thick was the fur of the foxes.
Such was the advent of autumn.
 Then followed that beautiful season,

Called by the pious Acadian peasants
the Summer of All-Saints!
Filled was the air with a dreamy
and magical light; and the landscape



Lay as if new-created
in all the freshness of childhood.
Peace seemed to reign upon earth,
and the restless heart of the ocean
Was for a moment consoled.
All sounds were in harmony blended.

Voices of children at play,
the crowing of cocks in the farm-yards,
Whir of wings in the drowsy air,
and the cooing of pigeons,
All were subdued and low as the
murmurs of love, and the great sun
Looked with the eye of love
through the golden vapors around him;
While arrayed in its robes
of russet and scarlet and yellow,
Bright with the sheen of the dew,
each glittering tree of the forest
Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian
adorned with mantles and jewels.

Now recommenced the reign
of rest and affection and stillness.
Day with its burden and heat
had departed, and twilight descending
Brought back the evening star to the sky,
and the herds to the homestead.
Pawing the ground they came,
and resting their necks on each other,

And with their nostrils distended
 inhaling the freshness of evening.
Foremost, bearing the bell,
 Evangeline's beautiful heifer,
Proud of her snow-white hide, and
 the ribbon that waved from her collar,
Quietly paced and slow,
 as if conscious of human affection.
Then came the shepherd back
 with his bleating flocks from the seaside,
Where was their favorite pasture.
 Behind them followed the watch-dog,
Patient, full of importance,
 and grand in the pride of his instinct,
Walking from side to side
 with a lordly air, and superbly
Waving his bushy tail,
 and urging forward the stragglers;
Regent of flocks was he
 when the shepherd slept; their protector,
When from the forest at night, through
 the starry silence, the wolves howled.
Late, with the rising moon,
 returned the wains from the marshes,



Laden with briny hay
that filled the air with its odor.
Cheerily neighed the steeds, with dew
on their manes and their fetlocks,
While aloft on their shoulders
the wooden and ponderous saddles,
Painted with brilliant dyes,
and adorned with tassels of crimson,
Nodded in bright array,
like hollyhocks heavy with blossoms.
Patiently stood the cows meanwhile,
and yielded their udders
Unto the milkmaid's hand;
whilst loud and in regular cadence

Into the sounding pails
the foaming streamlets descended.
Lowling of cattle and peals of laughter
were heard in the farm-yard,
Echoed back by the barns.

Anon they sank into stillness;
Heavily closed, with a jarring sound,
the valves of the barn-doors,
Rattled the wooden bars,
and all for a season was silent.

Indoors, warm by the wide-mouthed
fireplace, idly the farmer
Sat in his elbow-chair, and watched
how the flames and the smoke-wreaths
Struggled together like foes
in a burning city. Behind him,
Nodding and mocking along the wall,
with gestures fantastic,
Darted his own huge shadow,
and vanished away into darkness.
Faces, clumsily carved in oak,
on the back of his arm-chair

Laughed in the flickering light,
 and the pewter plates on the dresser
Caught and reflected the flame,
 as shields of armies the sunshine.
Fragments of song the old man sang,
 and carols of Christmas,
Such as at home, in the olden time,
 his fathers before him
Sang in their Norman orchards
 and bright Burgundian vineyards.
Close at her father's side
 was the gentle Evangeline seated,
Spinning flax for the loom,
 that stood in the corner behind her.
Silent awhile were its treadles,
 at rest was its diligent shuttle,
While the monotonous drone of the wheel,
 like the drone of a bagpipe,
Followed the old man's song,
 and united the fragments together.
As in a church, when the chant
 of the choir at intervals ceases,
Footfalls are heard in the aisles,
 or words of the priest at the altar,



*Close at her father's side
was the gentle Evangeline seated.*

So, in each pause of the song,
with measured motion the clock clicked.

Thus as they sat, there were footsteps
heard, and, suddenly lifted,



Sounded the wooden latch,
and the door swung back on its hinges.
Benedict knew by the hob-nailed shoes
it was Basil the blacksmith,
And by her beating heart
Evangeline knew who was with him.

“Welcome!” the farmer exclaimed, as
their footsteps paused on the threshold,
“Welcome, Basil, my friend!
Come, take thy place on the settle



Close by the chimney-side,
which is always empty without thee;
Take from the shelf overhead
thy pipe and the box of tobacco;
Never so much thyself art thou
as when through the curling

Smoke of the pipe or the forge
thy friendly and jovial face gleams
Round and red as the harvest moon
through the mist of the marshes.”
Then, with a smile of content,
thus answered Basil the blacksmith,
Taking with easy air
the accustomed seat by the fireside:—
“Benedict Bellefontaine,
thou hast ever thy jest and thy ballad.
Ever in cheerfullest mood art thou,
when others are filled with
Gloomy forebodings of ill,
and see only ruin before them!
Happy art thou, as if every day
thou hadst picked up a horseshoe.”
Pausing a moment, to take the pipe
that Evangeline brought him,
And with a coal from the embers
had lighted, he slowly continued:—
“Four days now are passed
since the English ships at their anchors
Ride in the Gaspereau’s mouth,
with their cannon pointed against us.

What their design may be is unknown;
but all are commanded
On the morrow to meet in the church,
where his Majesty's mandate
Will be proclaimed as law in the land.

Alas! in the meantime
Many surmises of evil

alarm the hearts of the people.”
Then made answer the farmer:—

“Perhaps some friendlier purpose
Brings these ships to our shores.

Perhaps the harvests in England
By the untimely rains or untimelier heat
have been blighted,
And from our bursting barns they
would feed their cattle and children.”

“Not so thinketh the folk in the village,”
said, warmly, the blacksmith,
Shaking his head, as in doubt;

then, heaving a sigh, he continued:—
“Louisburg is not forgotten,
nor Beau Séjour, nor Port Royal.
Many already have fled to the forest,
and lurk on its outskirts

Waiting with anxious hearts
the dubious fate of to-morrow.
Arms have been taken from us,
and warlike weapons of all kinds.
Nothing is left but the blacksmith's sledge
and the scythe of the mower."
Then with a pleasant smile
made answer the jovial farmer:—
"Safer are we unarmed in the midst
of our flocks and our cornfields,
Safer within these peaceful dikes,
besieged by the ocean,
Than were our fathers in forts,
besieged by the enemy's cannon.
Fear no evil, my friend,
and to-night may no shadow of sorrow
Fall on this house and hearth;
for this is the night of the contract.
Built are the house and the barn.
The merry lads of the village
Strongly have built them and well; and,
breaking the glebe round about them,
Filled the barn with hay, and the house
with food for a twelvemonth.

Children's children rode on his knee,
and heard his great watch tick.
Four long years in the times of the war
had he languished a captive,



Suffering much in an old French fort
as the friend of the English.
Now, though warier grown,
without all guile or suspicion,
Ripe in wisdom was he,
but patient, and simple, and childlike.

He was beloved by all,
 and most of all by the children;
For he told them tales
 of the Loup-garou in the forest,
And of the goblin that came in the night
 to water the horses,
And of the white Létiche,
 the ghost of a child who unchristened
Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen
 the chambers of children;
And how on Christmas Eve
 the oxen talked in the stable,
And how the fever was cured
 by a spider shut up in a nutshell,
And of the marvellous powers
 of four-leaved clover and horse-shoes,
With whatsoever else was writ
 in the lore of the village.
Then uprose from his seat
 by the fireside Basil the blacksmith,
Knocked from his pipe the ashes,
 and slowly extending his right hand,
"Father Leblanc," he exclaimed,
 "thou hast heard the talk in the village,



And, perchance, canst tell us some news
of these ships and their errand."

Then with modest demeanor

made answer the notary public:—

"Gossip enough have I heard, in sooth,
yet am never the wiser;

And what their errand may be

I know not better than others.

Yet am I not of those

who imagine some evil intention

Brings them here, for we are at peace;

and why then molest us?"

"God's name!" shouted the hasty

and somewhat irascible blacksmith;

"Must we in all things look for the how,

and the why, and the wherefore?

Daily injustice is done,

and might is the right of the strongest!"

But, without heeding his warmth,

continued the notary public:—

"Man is unjust, but God is just;

and finally justice

Triumphs; and well I remember

a story, that often consoled me,

When as a captive I lay

in the old French fort at Port Royal."

This was the old man's favorite tale,

and he loved to repeat it

Whenever neighbors complained

that any injustice was done them.

“Once in an ancient city,
 whose name I no longer remember,
Raised aloft on a column,
 a brazen statue of Justice
Stood in the public square,
 upholding the scales in its left hand,



And in its right a sword,
 as an emblem that justice presided
Over the laws of the land,
 and the hearts and homes of the people.
Even the birds had built their nests
 in the scales of the balance,

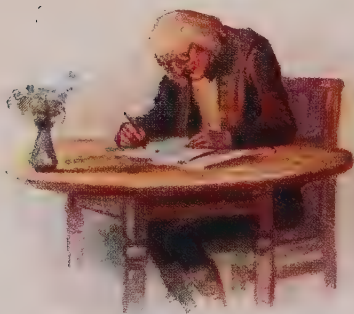
Having no fear of the sword
that flashed in the sunshine above them.
But in the course of time
the laws of the land were corrupted;
Might took the place of right, and
the weak were oppressed, and the mighty
Ruled with an iron rod.

Then it chanced in a nobleman's palace
That a necklace of pearls was lost,
and ere long a suspicion
Fell on an orphan girl
who lived as maid in the household.
She, after form of trial
condemned to die on the scaffold,
Patiently met her doom
at the foot of the statue of Justice.
As to her Father in heaven
her innocent spirit ascended,
Lo! o'er the city a tempest rose;
and the bolts of the thunder
Smote the statue of bronze,
and hurled in wrath from its left hand
Down on the pavement below
the clattering scales of the balance,

And in the hollow thereof
 was found the nest of a magpie,
Into whose clay-built walls
 the necklace of pearls was inwoven.”
Silenced, but not convinced,
 when the story was ended, the blacksmith
Stood like a man who fain would speak,
 but findeth no language;
All his thoughts congealed
 into lines on his face, as the vapors
Freeze in fantastic shapes
 on the window-panes in the winter.

Then Evangeline lighted
 the brazen lamp on the table,
Filled, till it overflowed,
 the pewter tankard with home-brewed
Nut-brown ale, that was famed for
 its strength in the village of Grand-Pré;
While from his pocket
 the notary drew his papers and ink-horn,
Wrote with a steady hand
 the date and the age of the parties,

Naming the dower of the bride
in flocks of sheep and in cattle.
Orderly all things proceeded,
and duly and well were completed,
And the great seal of the law
was set like a sun on the margin.



Then from his leathern pouch
the farmer threw on the table
Three times the old man's fee
in solid pieces of silver;
And the notary rising, and blessing
the bride and the bridegroom,

Lifted aloft the tankard of ale
and drank to their welfare.
Wiping the foam from his lip,
he solemnly bowed and departed,
While in silence the others sat
and mused by the fireside,
Till `Evangeline brought
the draught-board out of its corner.
Soon was the game begun.
In friendly contention the old men
Laughed at each lucky hit,
or unsuccessful manœuvre,
Laughed when a man was crowned,
or a breach was made in the king-row.
Meanwhile apart, in the twilight gloom
of a window's embrasure,
Sat the lovers, and whispered together,
beholding the moon rise
Over the pallid sea
and the silvery mist of the meadows.
Silently one by one,
in the infinite meadows of heaven,
Blossomed the lovely stars,
the forget-me-nots of the angels.

Thus passed the evening away.

Anon the bell from the belfry



Rang out the hour of nine,

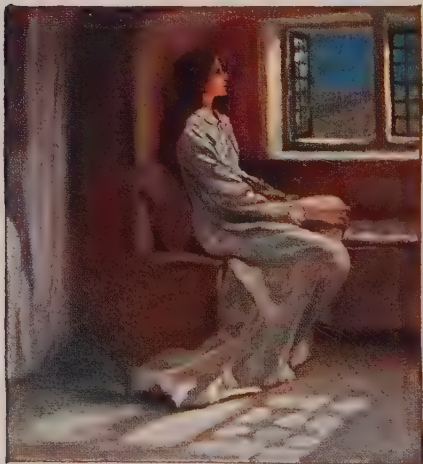
the village curfew, and straightway

Rose the guests and departed;

and silence reigned in the household.

Many a farewell word
 and sweet good-night on the door-step
Lingered long in Evangeline's heart,
 and filled it with gladness.
Carefully then were covered the embers
 that glowed on the hearthstone,
And on the oaken stairs
 resounded the tread of the farmer.
Soon with a soundless step
 the foot of Evangeline followed.
Up the staircase moved
 a luminous space in the darkness,
Lighted less by the lamp
 than the shining face of the maiden.
Silent she passed through the hall,
 and entered the door of her chamber.
Simple that chamber was, with its
 curtains of white, and its clothes-press
Ample and high, on whose
 spacious shelves were carefully folded
Linen and woollen stuffs,
 by the hand of Evangeline woven.
This was the precious dower she would
 bring to her husband in marriage,

Better than flocks and herds,
being proofs of her skill as a housewife.
Soon she extinguished her lamp,
for the mellow and radiant moonlight



Streamed through the windows, and lighted
the room, till the heart of the maiden
Swelled and obeyed its power,
like the tremulous tides of the ocean.
Ah! she was fair, exceeding fair
to behold, as she stood with

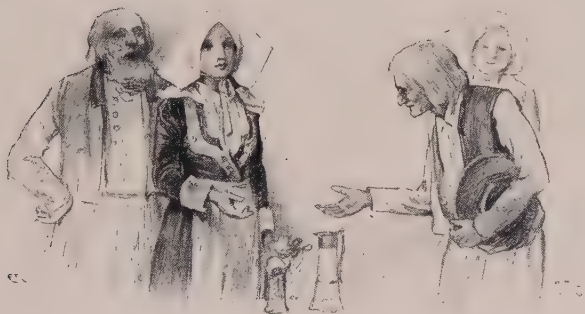
Naked snow-white feet on the
gleaming floor of her chamber!
Little she dreamed that below,
among the trees of the orchard,
Waited her lover and watched for
the gleam of her lamp and her shadow.
Yet were her thoughts of him,
and at times a feeling of sadness
Passed o'er her soul, as the sailing shade
of clouds in the moonlight
Flitted across the floor
and darkened the room for a moment.
And, as she gazed from the window,
she saw serenely the moon pass
Forth from the folds of a cloud,
and one star follow her footsteps,
As out of Abraham's tent
young Ishmael wandered with Hagar!

IV.

Pleasantly rose next morn the sun
on the village of Grand-Pré.
Pleasantly gleamed in the soft, sweet air
the Basin of Minas,

Where the ships, with their
 wavering shadows, were riding at anchor.
Life had long been astir in the village,
 and clamorous labor
Knocked with its hundred hands
 at the golden gates of the morning.
Now from the country around, from the
 farms and the neighboring hamlets,
Came in their holiday dresses
 the blithe Acadian peasants.
Many a glad good-morrow
 and jocund laugh from the young folk
Made the bright air brighter,
 as up from the numerous meadows,
Where no path could be seen but the
 track of wheels in the greensward,
Group after group appeared,
 and joined, or passed on the highway.
Long ere noon, in the village
 all sounds of labor were silenced.
Thronged were the streets with people;
 and noisy groups at the house-doors
Sat in the cheerful sun,
 and rejoiced and gossiped together.

Every house was an inn,
 where all were welcomed and feasted;
For with this simple people,
 who lived like brothers together,
All things were held in common,
 and what one had was another's.



Yet under Benedict's roof
 hospitality seemed more abundant:
For Evangeline stood
 among the guests of her father;
Bright was her face with smiles,
 and words of welcome and gladness
Fell from her beautiful lips,
 and blessed the cup as she gave it.

Under the open sky,
 in the odorous air of the orchard,
Bending with golden fruit,
 was spread the feast of betrothal.
There in the shade of the porch
 were the priest and the notary seated;
There good Benedict sat,
 and sturdy Basil the blacksmith.
Not far withdrawn from these,
 by the cider-press and the bee-hives,
Michael the fiddler was placed, with
 the gayest of hearts and of waistcoats.
Shadow and light from the leaves
 alternately played on his snow-white
Hair, as it waved in the wind;
 and the jolly face of the fiddler
Glowed like a living coal when
 the ashes are blown from the embers.
Gaily the old man sang
 to the vibrant sound of his fiddle,
Tous les Bourgeois de Chartres,
 and *Le Carillon de Dunkerque,*
And anon with his wooden shoes
 beat time to the music.

Merrily, merrily whirled the wheels
 of the dizzying dances
Under the orchard trees
 and down the path to the meadows;



Old folk and young together,
 and children mingled among them.
Fairest of all the maids was Evangeline,
 Benedict's daughter!
Noblest of all the youths was Gabriel,
 son of the blacksmith.

So passed the morning away.

And lo! with a summons sonorous
Sounded the bell from its tower,

and over the meadows a drum beat.
Thronged ere long was the church

with men. Without, in the churchyard,
Waited the women. They stood by the
graves, and hung on the head-stones
Garlands of autumn-leaves

and evergreens fresh from the forest.
Then came the guard from the ships,
and marching proudly among them
Entered the sacred portal.

With loud and dissonant clangor
Echoed the sound of their brazen drums
from ceiling and casement,—
Echoed a moment only,

and slowly the ponderous portal
Closed, and in silence the crowd
awaited the will of the soldiers.

Then uprose their commander,
and spake from the steps of the altar,
Holding aloft in his hands,
with its seals, the royal commission.



*Without, in the churchyard,
waited the women.*

“You are convened this day,” he said,
“by his Majesty’s orders.

Clement and kind has he been;
but how have ye answered his kindness?
Let your own hearts reply!

To my natural make and my temper
Painful the task is I do,

which to you I know must be grievous.
Yet must I bow and obey,

and deliver the will of our monarch;
Namely, that all your lands,

and dwellings, and cattle of all kinds
Forfeited be to the crown; and that

you yourselves from this province
Be transported to other lands.

God grant you may dwell there
Ever as faithful subjects,

a happy and peaceable people!
Prisoners now I declare you;

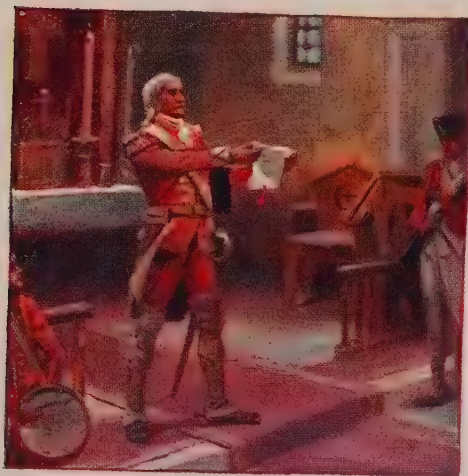
for such is his Majesty’s pleasure!”
As, when the air is serene

in the sultry solstice of summer,
Suddenly gathers a storm,

and the deadly sling of the hailstones

“Down with the tyrants of England!

We never have sworn them allegiance!
Death to these foreign soldiers, who
seize on our homes and our harvests!”



More he fain would have said,
but the merciless hand of a soldier
Smote him upon the mouth,
and dragged him down to the pavement.

This is the house of the Prince of Peace,
 and would you profane it
Thus with violent deeds
 and hearts overflowing with hatred?
Lo! where the crucified Christ
 from His cross is gazing upon you!
See! in those sorrowful eyes
 what meekness and holy compassion!
Hark! how those lips still repeat
 the prayer: ‘O Father, forgive them!’
Let us repeat that prayer
 in the hour when the wicked assail us,
Let us repeat it now, and say:
 ‘O Father, forgive them!’”

Few were his words of rebuke,
 but deep in the hearts of his people
Sank they, and sobs of contrition
 succeeded that passionate outbreak,
And they repeated his prayer,
 and said: “O Father, forgive them!”

Then came the evening service.

The tapers gleamed from the altar.

Fervent and deep was the voice
of the priest, and the people responded,
Not with their lips alone,
but their hearts; and the Ave Maria



Sang they, and fell on their knees,
and their souls, with devotion translated,
Rose on the ardor of prayer,
like Elijah ascending to heaven.

Meanwhile had spread in the village
the tidings of ill, and on all sides
Wandered, wailing, from house to house
the women and children.

Long at her father's door

Evangeline stood, with her right hand
Shielding her eyes from the level rays
of the sun, that, descending,

Lighted the village street with

mysterious splendor, and roofed each
Peasant's cottage with golden thatch,
and emblazoned its windows.

Long within had been spread

the snow-white cloth on the table;

There stood the wheaten loaf,

and the honey fragrant with wild flowers;

There stood the tankard of ale, and the

cheese fresh brought from the dairy;

And, at the head of the board,

the great arm-chair of the farmer.

Thus did Evangeline wait

at her father's door, as the sunset

Threw the long shadows of trees

o'er the broad ambrosial meadows.

Ah! on her spirit within
 a deeper shadow had fallen,
And from the fields of her soul
 a fragrance celestial ascended,—
Charity, meekness, love, and hope,
 and forgiveness, and patience!
Then, all-forgetful of self,
 she wandered into the village,
Cheering with looks and words
 the disconsolate hearts of the women,
As o'er the darkening fields
 with lingering steps they departed,
Urged by their household cares,
 and the weary feet of their children.
Down sank the great red sun,
 and in golden, glimmering vapors
Veiled the light of his face,
 like the Prophet descending from Sinai.
Sweetly over the village
 the bell of the Angelus sounded.

Meanwhile, amid the gloom,
 by the church Evangeline lingered.

All was silent within; and in vain
at the door and the windows
Stood she, and listened and looked,
until, overcome by emotion,



“Gabriell!” cried she aloud
with tremulous voice; but no answer
Came from the graves of the dead,
nor the gloomier grave of the living.

Slowly at length she returned
to the tenantless house of her father.
Smouldered the fire on the hearth,
on the board stood the supper untasted,



Empty and drear was each room,
and haunted with phantoms of terror.
Sadly echoed her step on the stair
and the floor of her chamber.
In the dead of the night
she heard the whispering rain fall

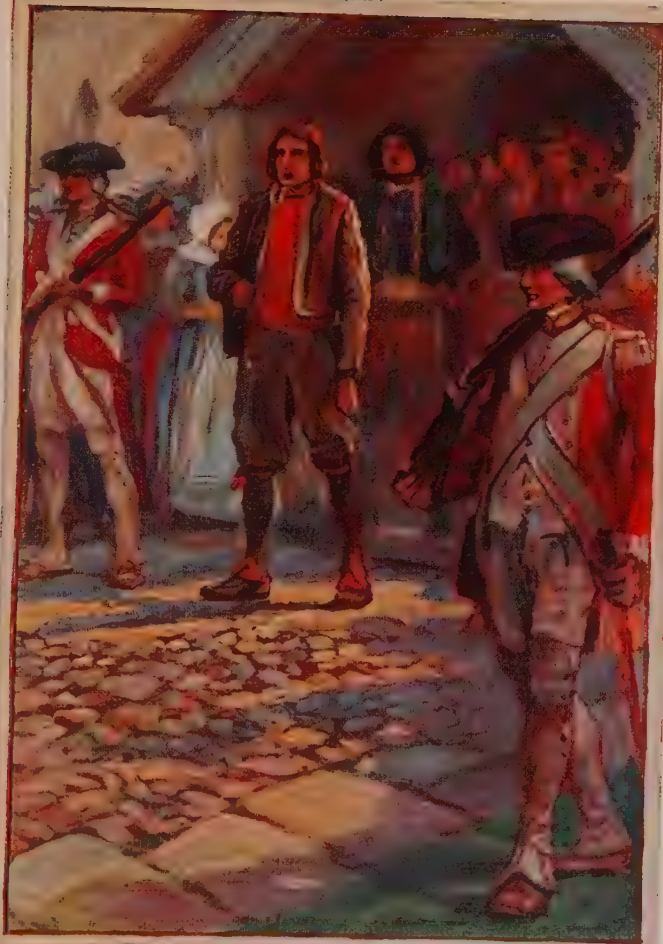
Loud on the withered leaves
 of the sycamore-tree by the window.
Keenly the lightning flashed;
 and the voice of the echoing thunder
Told her that God was in heaven,
 and governed the world He created!
Then she remembered the tale
 she had heard of the justice of heaven;
Soothed was her troubled soul,
 and she peacefully slumbered till morning.

V.

Four times the sun had risen and set;
 and now on the fifth day
Cheerily called the cock
 to the sleeping maids of the farm-house.
Soon o'er the yellow fields,
 in silent and mournful procession,
Came from the neighboring hamlets
 and farms the Acadian women,
Driving in ponderous wains
 their household goods to the seashore,
Pausing and looking back
 to gaze once more on their dwellings,

Ere they were shut from sight
by the winding road and the woodland.
Close at their sides their children ran,
and urged on the oxen,
While in their little hands they clasped
some fragments of playthings.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth
they hurried; and there on the sea-beach
Piled in confusion
lay the household goods of the peasants.
All day long between the shore
and the ships did the boats ply,
All day long the wains
came laboring down from the village.
Late in the afternoon,
when the sun was near to his setting,
Echoing far o'er the fields came
the roll of drums from the churchyard.
Thither the women and children thronged.
On a sudden the church-doors
Opened, and forth came the guard,
and marching in gloomy procession



*The Acadian peasants descended
Down from the church
to the shore.*

Followed the long-imprisoned,
but patient, Acadian farmers.
Even as pilgrims, who journey
afar from their homes and their country,
Sing as they go, and in singing
forget they are weary and way-worn,
So with songs on their lips
the Acadian peasants descended
Down from the church to the shore,
amid their wives and their daughters.
Foremost the young men came;
and, raising together their voices,
Sang they with tremulous lips
a chant of the Catholic Missions:—
“Sacred heart of the Saviour!
O inexhaustible fountain!
Fill our hearts this day with strength
and submission and patience!”
Then the old men, as they marched,
and the women that stood by the wayside,
Joined in the sacred psalm,
and the birds in the sunshine above them
Mingled their notes therewith,
like voices of spirits departed.

Half-way down to the shore

Evangeline waited in silence,
Not overcome with grief,

but strong in the hour of affliction,—
Calmly and sadly waited,

until the procession approached her,
And she beheld the face of Gabriel

pale with emotion.
Tears then filled her eyes,

and, eagerly running to meet him,
Clasped she his hands, and laid her head

on his shoulder, and whispered:—
“Gabriel! be of good cheer!

for if we love one another,
Nothing, in truth, can harm us,

whatever mischances may happen!”
Smiling she spake these words;

then suddenly paused, for her father
Saw she slowly advancing.

Alas! how changed was his aspect!
Gone was the glow from his cheek,

and the fire from his eye, and his footstep
Heavier seemed with the weight

of the weary heart in his bosom.

But with a smile and a sigh,
 she clasped his neck and embraced him,
Speaking words of endearment
 where words of comfort availed not.
Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth
 moved on that mournful procession.



There disorder prevailed,
 and the tumult and stir of embarking.
Busily plied the freighted boats;
 and in the confusion

Wives were torn from their husbands,
and mothers, too late, saw their children
Left on the land, extending their arms,
with wildest entreaties.

So unto separate ships
were Basil and Gabriel carried,
While in despair on the shore

Evangeline stood with her father.
Half the task was not done

when the sun went down, and the twilight
Deepened and darkened around ;

and in haste the refluent ocean
Fled away from the shore,

and left the line of the sand-beach
Covered with waifs of the tide,

with kelp and the slippery sea-weed.
Farther back, in the midst

of the household goods and the wagons,
Like to a gypsy camp,

or a leaguer after a battle,
All escape cut off by the sea,

and the sentinels near them,
Lay encamped for the night

the houseless Acadian farmers.

Sweet was the moist still air
 with the odor of milk from their udders;
Lowing they waited, and long,
 at the well-known bars of the farmyard,—
Waited and looked in vain for the voice
 and the hand of the milkmaid.
Silence reigned in the streets;
 from the church no Angelus sounded,
Rose no smoke from the roofs,
 and gleamed no lights from the windows.

But on the shores meanwhile
 the evening fires had been kindled,
Built of the drift-wood thrown
 on the sands from wrecks in the tempest.
Round them shapes of gloom
 and sorrowful faces were gathered;
Voices of women were heard,
 and of men, and the crying of children.
Onward from fire to fire,
 as from hearth to hearth in his parish,
Wandered the faithful priest,
 consoling and blessing and cheering,

Like unto shipwrecked Paul
 on Melita's desolate seashore.
Thus he approached the place
 where Evangeline sat with her father,



And in the flickering light
 beheld the face of the old man,
Haggard and hollow and wan,
 and without either thought or emotion,
E'en as the face of a clock
 from which the hands have been taken.

Vainly Evangeline strove
 with words and caresses to cheer him,
Vainly offered him food; yet he moved not,
 he looked not, he spake not,
But, with a vacant stare,
 ever gazed at the flickering fire-light.
“*Benedicite!*” murmured the priest,
 in tones of compassion.
More he fain would have said,
 but his heart was full, and his accents
Faltered and paused on his lips,
 as the feet of a child on a threshold,
Hushed by the scene he beholds,
 and the awful presence of sorrow.
Silently, therefore, he laid his hand
 on the head of the maiden,
Raising his eyes, full of tears,
 to the silent stars that above them
Moved on their way, unperturbed
 by the wrongs and sorrows of mortals.
Then sat he down at her side,
 and they wept together in silence.



*Vainly Evangeline strove with words
and caresses to cheer him.*

Suddenly rose from the south a light,
as in autumn the blood-red
Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven,
and o'er the horizon
Titan-like stretches its hundred hands
upon mountain and meadow,
Seizing the rocks and the rivers,
and piling huge shadows together.
Broader and ever broader
it gleamed on the roofs of the village,
Gleamed on the sky and the sea,
and the ships that lay in the roadstead.
Columns of shining smoke uprose,
and flashes of flame were
Thrust through their folds and withdrawn,
like the quivering hands of a martyr.
Then as the wind seized the gleeds
and the burning thatch, and, uplifting,
Whirled them aloft through the air,
at once from a hundred housetops
Started the sheeted smoke
with flashes of flame intermingled.

These things beheld in dismay
the crowd on the shore and on shipboard.
Speechless at first they stood,
then cried aloud in their anguish:



“We shall behold no more
our homes in the village of Grand-Pré!”
Loud on a sudden the cocks began to crow
in the farmyards,
Thinking the day had dawned;
and anon the lowing of cattle

Came on the evening breeze,
by the barking of dogs interrupted.
Then rose a sound of dread,
such as startles the sleeping encampments
Far in the western prairies or forests
that skirt the Nebraska,
When the wild horses affrighted sweep by
with the speed of the whirlwind
Or the loud bellowing herds of buffaloes
rush to the river.
Such was the sound that arose
on the night, as the herds and the horses
Broke through their folds and fences,
and madly rushed o'er the meadows.

Overwhelmed with the sight, yet speechless,
the priest and the maiden
Gazed on the scene of terror
that reddened and widened before them;
And as they turned at length
to speak to their silent companion,
Lo! from his seat he had fallen,
and stretched abroad on the seashore

Motionless lay his form,
from which the soul had departed.
Slowly the priest uplifted
the lifeless head, and the maiden



Knelt at her father's side,
and wailed aloud in her terror.
Then in a swoon she sank,
and lay with her head on his bosom.

Through the long night
 she lay in deep, oblivious slumber;
And when she woke from the trance,
 she beheld a multitude near her.
Faces of friends she beheld,
 that were mournfully gazing upon her,
Pallid, with tearful eyes,
 and looks of saddest compassion.
Still the blaze of the burning village
 illumined the landscape,
Reddened the sky overhead,
 and gleamed on the faces around her,
And like the day of doom
 it seemed to her wavering senses.
Then a familiar voice she heard,
 as it said to the people:—
“Let us bury him here by the sea.
 When a happier season
Brings us again to our homes
 from the unknown land of our exile,
Then shall his sacred dust
 be piously laid in the churchyard.”
Such were the words of the priest.
 And there in haste by the seaside,

Having the glare of the burning village
for funeral torches,
But without bell or book,
they buried the farmer of Grand-Pré



And as the voice of the priest
repeated the service of sorrow,
Lo! with a mournful sound,
like the voice of a vast congregation,

Solemnly answered the sea,
 and mingled its roar with the dirges.
'Twas the returning tide,
 that afar from the waste of the ocean,
With the first dawn of the day,
 came heaving and hurrying landward.
Then recommenced once more
 the stir and noise of embarking;
And with the ebb of that tide
 the ships sailed out of the harbor,
Leaving behind them the dead
 on the shore, and the village in ruins.



PART THE SECOND.

I.

MANY a weary year had passed
since the burning of Grand-Pré,
When on the falling tide
the freighted vessels departed,
Bearing a nation,
with all its household gods, into exile,—
Exile without an end,
and without an example in story.
Far asunder, on separate coasts,
the Acadians landed;
Scattered were they, like flakes of snow,
when the wind from the north-east
Strikes aslant through the fogs
that darken the Banks of Newfoundland.
Friendless, homeless, hopeless,
they wandered from city to city,
From the cold lakes of the North
to sultry Southern savannas,—

From the bleak shores of the sea
to the lands where the Father of Waters
Seizes the hills in his hands,
and drags them down to the ocean,
Deep in their sands to bury
the scattered bones of the mammoth.
Friends they sought and homes;
and many, despairing, heart-broken,
Asked of the earth but a grave,
and no longer a friend nor a fireside.
Written their history stands
on tablets of stone in the churchyards.
Long among them was seen
a maiden who waited and wandered,
Lowly and meek in spirit,
and patiently suffering all things.
Fair was she and young;
but, alas! before her extended,
Dreary and vast and silent,
the desert of life, with its pathway
Marked by the graves of those
who had sorrowed and suffered before her,
Passions long extinguished,
and hopes long dead and abandoned,

As the emigrant's way
 o'er the Western desert is marked by
Camp-fires long consumed,
 and bones that bleach in the sunshine.
Something there was in her life
 incomplete, imperfect, unfinished;
As if a morning of June,
 with all its music and sunshine,
Suddenly paused in the sky,
 and, fading, slowly descended
Into the East again,
 from whence it late had arisen.
Sometimes she lingered in towns,
 till, urged by the fever within her,
Urged by a restless longing,
 the hunger and thirst of the spirit,
She would commence again
 her endless search and endeavor;
Sometimes in churchyards strayed,
 and gazed on the crosses and tombstones,
Sat by some nameless grave,
 and thought that perhaps in its bosom
He was already at rest,
 and she longed to slumber beside him.

Sometimes a rumor, a hearsay,
 an inarticulate whisper,
Came with its airy hand
 to point and beckon her forward.



Sometimes she spake with those
 who had seen her beloved and known him,
 But it was long ago,
 in some far-off place or forgotten.
 "Gabriel Lajeunesse!" said they;
 "oh, yes! we have seen him."

He was with Basil the blacksmith,
and both have gone to the prairies;
Coureurs-des-bois are they,
and famous hunters and trappers."

"Gabriel Lajeunesse!" said others;
"oh, yes! we have seen him.

He is a *voyageur*
in the lowlands of Louisiana."

Then would they say: "Dear child!
why dream and wait for him longer?

Are there not other youths
as fair as Gabriel? others

Who have hearts as tender and true,
and spirits as loyal?

Here is Baptiste Leblanc,
the notary's son, who has loved thee

Many a tedious year; come,
give him thy hand and be happy!

Thou art too fair to be left
to braid St. Catherine's tresses."

Then would Evangeline answer,
serenely but sadly: "I cannot!

Whither my heart has gone,
there follows my hand, and not elsewhere.

For when the heart goes before,
like a lamp, and illumines the pathway,
Many things are made clear,
that else lie hidden in darkness."



And thereupon the priest,
her friend and father confessor,
Said, with a smile: "O daughter!
thy God thus speaketh within thee!

Talk not of wasted affection,
 affection never was wasted;
If it enrich not the heart of another,
 its waters, returning
Back to their springs, like the rain,
 shall fill them full of refreshment;
That which the fountain sends forth
 returns again to the fountain.
Patience; accomplish thy labor;
 accomplish thy work of affection!
Sorrow and silence are strong,
 and patient endurance is godlike.
Therefore accomplish thy labor of love,
 till the heart is made godlike,
Purified, strengthened, perfected,
 and rendered more worthy of heaven!"
Cheered by the good man's words,
 Evangeline labored and waited.
Still in her heart she heard
 the funeral dirge of the ocean,
But with its sound there was mingled
 a voice that whispered: "Despair not!"
Thus did that poor soul wander
 in want and cheerless discomfort,

Bleeding, barefooted, over the shards
and thorns of existence.

Let me essay, O Muse!
to follow the wanderer's footsteps;—



Not through each devious path,
each changeful year of existence;
But as a traveller follows
a streamlet's course through the valley:
Far from its margin at times,
and seeing the gleam of its water

Here and there, in some open space,
 and at intervals only,
Then drawing nearer its banks,
 through sylvan glooms that conceal it,
Though he behold it not,
 he can hear its continuous murmur;
Happy, at length, if he find the spot
 where it reaches an outlet.

II.

It was the month of May.
 Far down the Beautiful River,
 Past the Ohio shore
 and past the mouth of the Wabash,
 Into the golden stream
 of the broad and swift Mississippi,
 Floated a cumbrous boat,
 that was rowed by Acadian boatmen.
 It was a band of exiles: a raft,
 as it were, from the shipwrecked
 Nation, scattered along the coast,
 now floating together,
 Bound by the bonds of a common belief
 and a common misfortune:



Day after day they glided
down the turbulent river.

Men and women and children, who,
 guided by hope or by hearsay,
Sought for their kith and their kin
 among the few-acred farmers
On the Acadian coast,
 and the prairies of fair Opelousas.
With them Evangeline went,
 and her guide, the Father Felician.
Onward o'er sunken sands,
 through a wilderness sombre with forests,
Day after day they glided
 adown the turbulent river;
Night after night, by their blazing fires,
 encamped on its borders.
Now through rushing chutes,
 among green islands, where plume-like
Cotton-trees nodded their shadowy crests,
 they swept with the current,
Then emerged into broad lagoons,
 where silvery sand-bars
Lay in the stream, and along
 the wimpling waves of their margin,
Shining with snow-white plumes,
 large flocks of pelicans waded.

Level the landscape grew,
and along the shores of the river,
Shaded by china-trees,
in the midst of luxuriant gardens,



Stood the houses of planters,
with negro-cabins and dove cots.
They were approaching the region
where reigns perpetual summer,
Where through the Golden Coast,
and groves of orange and citron,

Sweeps with majestic curve
the river away to the eastward.
They, too, swerved from their course;
and, entering the Bayou of Plaquemine,
Soon were lost in a maze
of sluggish and devious waters,
Which, like a network of steel,
extended in every direction.
Over their heads the towering
and tenebrous boughs of the cypress
Met in a dusky arch,
and trailing mosses in mid-air
Waved like banners that hang
on the walls of ancient cathedrals.
Deathlike the silence seemed,
and unbroken, save by the herons
Home to their roosts in the cedar-trees
returning at sunset,
Or by the owl, as he greeted the moon
with demoniac laughter.
Lovely the moonlight was
as it glanced and gleamed on the water,
Gleamed on the columns of cypress
and cedar sustaining the arches,

Down through whose broken vaults
it fell as through chinks in a ruin.
Dreamlike, and indistinct, and strange
were all things around them;



And o'er their spirits there came
a feeling of wonder and sadness,—
Strange forebodings of ill,
unseen and that cannot be compassed.

Sailed on those gloomy and midnight
streams, blew a blast on his bugle.
Wild through the dark colonnades
and corridors leafy the blast rang,



Breaking the seal of silence,
and giving tongues to the forest.
Soundless above them the banners of moss
just stirred to the music.
Multitudinous echoes awoke
and died in the distance,

Over the watery floor,
 and beneath the reverberant branches;
But not a voice replied;
 no answer came from the darkness;
And, when the echoes had ceased,
 like a sense of pain was the silence.
Then Evangeline slept; but the boatmen
 rowed through the midnight,
Silent at times, then singing
 familiar Canadian boat-songs,
Such as they sang of old
 on their own Acadian rivers,
And through the night were heard
 the mysterious sounds of the desert,
Far off, indistinct, as of wave
 or wind in the forest,
Mixed with the whoop of the crane
 and the roar of the grim alligator.

Thus ere another noon they emerged
 from those shades; and before them
Lay, in the golden sun,
 the lakes of the Atchafalaya.



Tired with their midnight toil,
the weary travellers
slumbered.

Swinging from its great arms,
the trumpet-flower and the grape-vine
Hung their ladder of ropes aloft
like the ladder of Jacob,
On whose pendulous stairs
the angels ascending, descending,



Were the swift humming-birds,
that flitted from blossom to blossom.
Such was the vision Evangeline saw
as she slumbered beneath it.
Filled was her heart with love,
and the dawn of an opening heaven

Lighted her soul in sleep
with the glory of regions celestial.

Nearer, and ever nearer,
among the numberless islands,
Darted a light, swift boat,
that sped away o'er the water,
Urged on its course by the sinewy arms
of hunters and trappers.

Northward its prow was turned,
to the land of the bison and beaver.

At the helm sat a youth,
with countenance thoughtful and careworn.

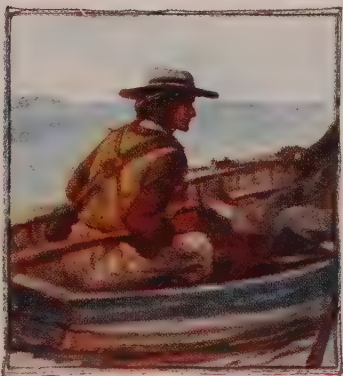
Dark and neglected locks
overshadowed his brow, and a sadness
Somewhat beyond his years
on his face was legibly written.

Gabriel was it, who, weary with waiting,
unhappy and restless,

Sought in the Western wilds
oblivion of self and of sorrow.

Swiftly they glided along,
close under the lee of the island,

But by the opposite bank,
 and behind a screen of palmettos,
So that they saw not the boat,
 where it lay concealed in the willows,
And undisturbed by the dash of their oars,
 and unseen, were the sleepers:



Angel of God was there none
 to awaken the slumbering maiden.
Swiftly they glided away,
 like the shade of a cloud on the prairie.
After the sound of their oars on the tholes
 had died in the distance,

As from a magic trance
the sleepers awoke, and the maiden
Said with a sigh to the friendly priest:
"O, Father Felician!
Something says in my heart
that near me Gabriel wanders.
Is it a foolish dream,
an idle and vague superstition?
Or has an angel passed,
and revealed the truth to my spirit?"
Then, with a blush, she added:
"Alas for my credulous fancy!
Unto ears like thine
such words as these have no meaning."
But made answer the reverend man,
and he smiled as he answered:
"Daughter, thy words are not idle;
nor are they to me without meaning.
Feeling is deep and still;
and the word that floats on the surface
Is as the tossing buoy,
that betrays where the anchor is hidden.
Therefore, trust to thy heart,
and to what the world calls illusions.

Gabriel truly is near thee;
for not far away to the southward,
On the banks of the Têche,
are the towns of St. Maur and St. Martin.
There the long-wandering bride
shall be given again to her bridegroom,
There the long-absent pastor
regain his flock and his sheepfold.
Beautiful is the land, with its prairies
and forests of fruit-trees;
Under the feet a garden of flowers,
and the bluest of heavens
Bending above, and resting its dome
on the walls of the forest.
They who dwell there have named it
the Eden of Louisiana."

And with these words of cheer
they arose and continued their journey.
Softly the evening came.

The sun from the western horizon
Like a magician extended
his golden wand o'er the landscape;

Slowly they entered the Têche, where
 it flows through the green Opelousas,
And through the amber air,
 above the crest of the woodland,
Saw the column of smoke that arose
 from a neighboring dwelling;—
Sounds of a horn they heard,
 and the distant lowing of cattle.

III.

Near to the bank of the river,
 o'ershadowed by oaks, from whose branches
Garlands of Spanish moss
 and of mystic mistletoe flaunted,
Such as the Druids cut down
 with golden hatchets at Yule-tide,
Stood, secluded and still,
 the house of the herdsman. A garden
Girded it round about
 with a belt of luxuriant blossoms,
Filling the air with fragrance.
 The house itself was of timbers
Hewn from the cypress-tree,
 and carefully fitted together.

Large and low was the roof;
 and on slender columns supported,
Rose-wreathed, vine-encircled,
 a broad and spacious veranda,
Haunt of the humming-bird
 and the bee, extended around it.



At each end of the house,
 amid the flowers of the garden,
Stationed the dove-cots were,
 as love's perpetual symbol,
Scenes of endless wooing,
 and endless contentions of rivals.

Silence reigned o'er the place.

 The line of shadow and sunshine
Ran near the tops of the trees;
 but the house itself was in shadow,
And from its chimney-top,
 ascending and slowly expanding



Into the evening air,
 a thin blue column of smoke rose,
In the rear of the house,
 from the garden gate, ran a pathway
Through the great groves of oak
 to the skirts of the limitless prairie.

Into whose sea of flowers
the sun was slowly descending.
Full in his track of light,
like ships with shadowy canvas
Hanging loose from their spars
in a motionless calm in the tropics,
Stood a cluster of trees,
with tangled cordage of grape-vines.

Just where the woodlands met
the flowery surf of the prairie,
Mounted upon his horse,
with Spanish saddle and stirrups,
Sat a herdsman, arrayed in gaiters
and doublet of deerskin.
Broad and brown was the face
that from under the Spanish sombrero
Gazed on the peaceful scene,
with the lordly look of its master.
Round about him were numberless
herds of kine, that were grazing
Quietly in the meadows,
and breathing the vapory freshness

That uprose from the river,
 and spread itself over the landscape.
Slowly lifting the horn
 that hung at his side, and expanding
Fully his broad, deep chest,
 he blew a blast, that resounded
Wildly and sweet and far,
 through the still damp air of the evening.
Suddenly out of the grass
 the long white horns of the cattle
Rose like flakes of foam
 on the adverse currents of ocean.
Silent a moment they gazed,
 then bellowing rushed o'er the prairie,
And the whole mass became a cloud,
 a shade in the distance.
Then, as the herdsman turned to the house,
 through the gate of the garden
Saw he the forms of the priest
 and the maiden advancing to meet him.
Suddenly down from his horse
 he sprang in amazement, and forward
Rushed with extended arms
 and exclamations of wonder;

When they beheld his face,
 they recognised Basil the blacksmith.
Hearty his welcome was
 as he led his guests to the garden.
There in an arbor of roses
 with endless question and answer
Gave they vent to their hearts,
 and renewed their friendly embraces,
Laughing and weeping by turns,
 or sitting silent and thoughtful.
Thoughtful, for Gabriel came not;
 and now dark doubts and misgivings
Stole o'er the maiden's heart;
 and Basil, somewhat embarrassed,
Broke the silence and said:
 “If you came by the Atchafalaya,
How have you nowhere encountered
 my Gabriel's boat on the bayous?”
Over Evangeline's face
 at the words of Basil a shade passed.
Tears came into her eyes,
 and she said, with a tremulous accent:
“Gone? is Gabriel gone?” and,
 concealing her face on his shoulder,

All her o'erburdened heart gave way,
 and she wept and lamented.
Then the good Basil said,—
 and his voice grew blithe as he said it,—
"Be of good cheer, my child;
 it is only to-day he departed.



Foolish boy! he has left me alone
 with my herds and my horses.
Moody and restless grown,
 and tried and troubled, his spirit
Could no longer endure
 the calm of this quiet existence.

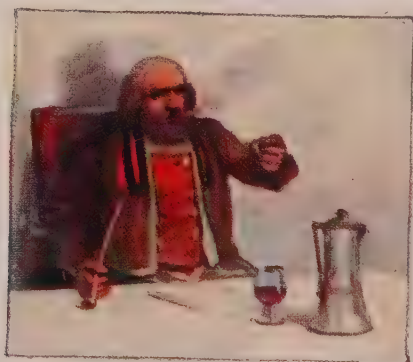
Thinking ever of thee,
 uncertain and sorrowful ever,
Ever silent, or speaking
 only of thee and his troubles,
He at length had become so tedious
 to men and to maidens,
Tedious even to me, that at length
 I bethought me, and sent him
Unto the town of Adayes
 to trade for mules with the Spaniards.
Thence he will follow the Indian trails
 to the Ozark Mountains,
Hunting for furs in the forests,
 on rivers trapping the beaver.
Therefore be of good cheer;
 we will follow the fugitive lover;
He is not far on his way, and the Fates
 and the streams are against him.
Up and away to-morrow,
 and through the red dew of the morning
We will follow him fast,
 and bring him back to his prison."

Then glad voices were heard,
 and up from the banks of the river,
Borne aloft on his comrades' arms,
 came Michael the fiddler.
Long under Basil's roof
 had he lived like a god on Olympus,
Having no other care
 than dispensing music to mortals.
Far renowned was he
 for his silver locks and his fiddle.
"Long live Michael," they cried,
 "our brave Acadian minstrel!"
As they bore him aloft
 in triumphal procession; and straightway
Father Felician advanced with Evangeline,
 greeting the old man
Kindly and oft, and recalling the past,
 while Basil, enraptured,
Hailed with hilarious joy
 his old companions and gossips,
Laughing loud and long,
 and embracing mothers and daughters.
Much they marvelled to see
 the wealth of the ci-devant blacksmith,

All his domains and his herds,
and his patriarchal demeanor;
Much they marvelled to hear
his tales of the soil and the climate,
And of the prairies, whose numberless
herds were his who would take them;
Each one thought in his heart
that he, too, would go and do likewise.
Thus they ascended the steps,
and, crossing the airy veranda,
Entered the hall of the house,
where already the supper of Basil
Waited his late return;
and they rested and feasted together.

Then from his station aloft,
 at the head of the table, the herdsman
Poured forth his heart and his wine
 together in endless profusion.
Lighting his pipe, that was filled
 with sweet Natchitoches tobacco,
Thus he spake to his guests, who listened,
 and smiled as they listened:
“Welcome once more, my friends, who
 so long have been friendless and homeless!
Welcome once more to a home
 that is better perchance than the old one!
Here no hungry winter
 congeals our blood like the rivers;
Here no stony ground
 provokes the wrath of the farmer.
Smoothly the ploughshare runs through
 the soil, as a keel through the water.
All the year round the orange-groves
 are in blossom; and grass grows
More in a single night
 than a whole Canadian summer.
Here, too, numberless herds
 run wild and unclaimed in the prairies;

Here, too, lands may be had
 for the asking, and forests of timber
With a few blows of the axe
 are hewn and framed into houses.
After your houses are built,
 and your fields are yellow with harvests,



No King George of England shall drive you
 away from your homesteads,
Burning your dwellings and barns,
 and stealing your farms and your cattle.”
Speaking these words, he blew
 a wrathful cloud from his nostrils,

And his huge, brawny hand
 came thundering down on the table,
So that the guests all started;
 and Father Felician, astounded,
Suddenly paused, with a pinch of snuff
 half-way to his nostrils.
But the brave Basil resumed,
 and his words were milder and gayer:
"Only beware of the fever,
 my friends, beware of the fever!
For it is not like that
 of our cold Acadian climate,
Cured by wearing a spider
 hung round one's neck in a nutshell!"
Then there were voices heard at the door,
 and footsteps approaching
Sounded upon the stairs
 and the floor of the breezy veranda.
It was the neighboring Creoles
 and small Acadian planters,
Who had been summoned all
 to the house of Basil the herdsman.
Merry the meeting was
 of ancient comrades and neighbors;

Friend clasped friend in his arms;
and they who before were as strangers,
Meeting in exile, became straightway
as friends to each other,
Drawn by the gentle bond
of a common country together.



But in the neighboring hall
a strain of music, proceeding
From the accordant strings
of Michael's melodious fiddle,
Broke up all further speech.
Away, like children delighted,

All things forgotten beside,
 they gave themselves to the maddening
Whirl of the dizzy dance,
 as it swept and swayed to the music,
Dreamlike, with beaming eyes
 and the rush of fluttering garments.

Meanwhile, apart, at the head of the hall,
 the priest and the herdsman
Sat, conversing together of past
 and present and future;
While Evangeline stood
 like one entranced, for within her
Olden memories rose, and loud
 in the midst of the music
Heard she the sound of the sea,
 and an irrepressible sadness
Came o'er her heart, and unseen
 she stole forth into the garden.
Beautiful was the night.
 Behind the black wall of the forest,
Tipping its summit with silver,
 arose the moon. On the river



*Evangeline stood
like one entranced.*

Fell here and there through the branches
a tremulous gleam of the moonlight,
Like the sweet thoughts of love
on a darkened and devious spirit.
Nearer and round about her,
the manifold flowers of the garden



Poured out their souls in odors,
that were their prayers and confessions
Unto the night, as it went its way,
like a silent Carthusian.
Fuller of fragrance than they, and
as heavy with shadows and night-dews,

Hung the heart of the maiden.

The calm and the magical moonlight
Seemed to inundate her soul

with indefinable longings,
As, through the garden gate,
beneath the brown shade of the oak-trees,
Passed she along the path

to the edge of the measureless prairie.
Silent it lay, with a silvery haze

upon it, and fireflies
Gleaming and floating away
in mingled and infinite numbers.

Over her head the stars,
the thoughts of God in the heavens,
Shone on the eyes of man,

who had ceased to marvel and worship,
Save when a blazing comet was seen

on the walls of that temple,
As if a hand had appeared
and written upon them, "Upharsin."

And the soul of the maiden,
between the stars and the fireflies,
Wandered alone, and she cried:

"O Gabriel! O my beloved!

Art thou so near unto me,
 and yet I cannot behold thee?
Art thou so near unto me,
 and yet thy voice does not reach me?
Ah! how often thy feet have trod
 this path to the prairie!
Ah! how often thine eyes have looked
 on the woodlands around me!
Ah! how often beneath this oak,
 returning from labor,
Thou hast lain down to rest,
 and to dream of me in thy slumbers!
When shall these eyes behold,
 these arms be folded about thee?"
Loud and sudden and near
 the note of a whippoorwill sounded
Like a flute in the woods, and, anon,
 through the neighboring thickets,
Farther and farther away it floated
 and dropped into silence.
"Patience!" whispered the oaks
 from oracular caverns of darkness;
And, from the moonlit meadow,
 a sigh responded: "To-morrow!"

Bright rose the sun next day;
 and all the flowers of the garden
Bathed his shining feet with their tears,
 and anointed his tresses
With the delicious balm
 that they bore in their vases of crystal.



“Farewell!” said the priest,
 as he stood at the shadowy threshold;
“See that you bring us the Prodigal Son
 from his fasting and famine,
And, too, the Foolish Virgin who slept
 when the bridegroom was coming.”

“Farewell!” answered the maiden,
and, smiling, with Basil descended
Down to the river’s brink,
where the boatmen already were waiting.
Thus beginning their journey
with morning, and sunshine, and gladness,
Swiftly they followed the flight
of him who was speeding before them,
Blown by the blast of fate
like a dead leaf over the desert.
Not that day, nor the next,
nor yet the day that succeeded,
Found they trace of his course,
in lake or forest or river,
Nor, after many days, had they found him;
but vague and uncertain
Rumors alone were their guides
through a wild and desolate country:
Till, at the little inn
of the Spanish town of Adayes,
Weary and worn, they alighted,
and learned from the garrulous landlord
That on the day before, with horses
and guides and companions,

Gabriel left the village,
and took the road of the prairies.

IV.

Far in the west there lies a desert land,
where the mountains



Lift, through perpetual snows,
their lofty and luminous summits.
Down from their jagged, deep ravines,
where the gorge, like a gateway,
Opens a passage rude
to the wheels of the emigrant's wagon,

Westward the Oregon flows,
 and the Walleway and Owyhee.
Eastward, with devious course,
 among the Wind-river Mountains,
Through the Sweet-water Valley
 precipitate leaps the Nebraska;
And to the south, from Fontaine-qui-bout
 and the Spanish sierras,
Fretted with sands and rocks,
 and swept by the wind of the desert,
Numberless torrents, with ceaseless sound,
 descend to the ocean,
Like the great chords of a harp,
 in loud and solemn vibrations.
Spreading between these streams
 are the wondrous, beautiful prairies,
Billowy bays of grass,
 ever rolling in shadow and sunshine,
Bright with luxuriant clusters
 of roses and purple amorphas.
Over them wander the buffalo herds,
 and the elk, and the roebuck;
Over them wander the wolves
 and herds of riderless horses;

Fires that blast and blight,
and winds that are weary with travel;
Over them wander the scattered tribes
of Ishmael's children,
Staining the desert with blood;
and above their terrible war-trails



Circles and sails aloft,
on pinions majestic, the vulture,
Like the implacable soul ,
of a chieftain slaughtered in battle,
By invisible stairs ascending
and scaling the heavens.



Sometimes they..... thought
they saw the smoke of his
camp-fire.

Here and there rises smoke from
 the camps of these savage marauders;
Here and there rise groves
 from the margins of swift-running rivers;
And the grim, taciturn bear,
 the anchorite monk of the desert,
Climbs down their dark ravines
 to dig for roots by the brook-side;
And over all is the sky,
 the clear and crystalline heaven,
Like the protecting hand of God
 inverted above them.

Into this wonderful land,
 at the base of the Ozark Mountains,
Gabriel far had entered,
 with hunters and trappers behind him.
Day after day, with their Indian guides,
 the maiden and Basil
Followed his flying steps,
 and thought each day to o'ertake him.
Sometimes they saw, or thought they saw,
 the smoke of his camp fire

Rise in the morning air
from the distant plain; but at nightfall,
When they had reached the place,
they found only embers and ashes.
And, though their hearts were sad at times,
and their bodies were weary,
Hope still guided them on,
as the magic Fata Morgana
Showed them her lakes of light,
that retreated and vanished before them.

Once, as they sat by their evening fire,
there silently entered
Into the little camp
an Indian woman, whose features
Wore deep traces of sorrow,
and patience as great as her sorrow.
She was a Shawnee woman
returning home to her people
From the far-off hunting-grounds
of the cruel Camanches,
Where her Canadian husband,
a *coureur-des-bois*, had been murdered.

Touched were their hearts at her story,
and warmest and friendliest welcome
Gave they, with words of cheer,
and she sat and feasted among them
On the buffalo-meat and the venison
cooked on the embers.
But when their meal was done,
and Basil and all his companions,
Worn with the long day's march
and the chase of the deer and the bison,
Stretched themselves on the ground,
and slept where the quivering fire-light
Flashed on their swarthy cheeks, and
their forms wrapped up in their blankets,
Then at the door of Evangeline's tent
she sat and repeated
Slowly, with soft, low voice,
and the charm of her Indian accent,
All the tale of her love,
with its pleasures, and pains, and reverses.
Much Evangeline wept at the tale,
and to know that another
Hapless heart like her own
had loved and had been disappointed.

Moved to the depths of her soul
by pity and woman's compassion,
Yet in her sorrow pleased
that one who had suffered was near her,
She in turn related her love
and all its disasters.
Mute with wonder the Shawnee sat,
and when she had ended
Still was mute; but at length,
as if a mysterious horror
Passed through her brain, she spake,
and repeated the tale of the Mowis;
Mowis, the bridegroom of snow,
who won and wedded a maiden,
But, when the morning came,
arose and passed from the wigwam,
Fading and melting away
and dissolving into the sunshine,
Till she beheld him no more,
though she followed far into the forest.
Then, in those sweet, low tones,
that seemed like a weird incantation,
Told she the tale of the fair Lilinau,
who was wooed by a phantom,

That, through the pines o'er her father's
lodge, in the hush of the twilight,
Breathed like the evening wind,
and whispered love to the maiden,



Till she followed his green
and waving plume through the forest,
And never more returned,
nor was seen again by her people.
Silent with wonder and strange surprise,
Evangeline listened

To the soft flow of her magical words,
till the region around her
Seemed like enchanted ground,
and her swarthy guest the enchantress.
Slowly over the tops
of the Ozark Mountains the moon rose,
Lighting the little tent,
and with a mysterious splendor
Touching the sombre leaves,
and embracing and filling the woodland.
With a delicious sound
the brook rushed by, and the branches
Swayed and sighed overhead
in scarcely audible whispers.
Filled with the thoughts of love
was Evangeline's heart, but a secret,
Subtile sense crept in of pain
and indefinite terror,
As the cold, poisonous snake
creeps into the nest of the swallow
It was no earthly fear.
A breath from the region of spirits
Seemed to float in the air of night;
and she felt for a moment

That, like the Indian maid,
 she, too, was pursuing a phantom.
And with this thought she slept, and
 the fear and the phantom had vanished.



Early upon the morrow the march
 was resumed; and the Shawnee
Said, as they journeyed along:
 “On the western slope of these mountains
Dwells in his little village
 the Black Robe chief of the Mission.

Much he teaches the people,
and tells them of Mary and Jesus;
Loud laugh their hearts with joy,
and weep with pain, as they hear him.”
Then, with a sudden and secret emotion,
Evangeline answered:
“Let us go to the Mission,
for there good tidings await us!”
Thither they turned their steeds;
and behind a spur of the mountains,
Just as the sun went down,
they heard a murmur of voices,
And in a meadow green and broad,
by the bank of a river,
Saw the tents of the Christians,
the tents of the Jesuit Mission.
Under a towering oak,
that stood in the midst of the village,
Knelt the Black Robe chief
with his children. A crucifix fastened
High on the trunk of the tree,
and overshadowed by grape-vines,
Looked with its agonised face
on the multitude kneeling beneath it.

This was their rural chapel.

Aloft, through the intricate arches
Of its aerial roof,
arose the chant of their vespers,



Mingling its notes with the soft susurrus
and sighs of the branches.
Silent, with heads uncovered,
the travellers, nearer approaching,
Knelt on the swarded floor,
and joined in evening devotions.

But when the service was done,
 and the benediction had fallen
Forth from the hands of the priest,
 like seed from the hands of the sower,
Slowly the reverend man advanced
 to the strangers, and bade them
Welcome; and when they replied
 he smiled with benignant expression,
Hearing the home-like sounds
 of his mother-tongue in the forest,
And with words of kindness
 conducted them into his wigwam.
There upon mats and skins they reposed,
 and on cakes of the maize-ear
Feasted, and slaked their thirst
 from the water-gourd of the teacher.
Soon was their story told;
 and the priest with solemnity answered:
“Not six suns have risen and set
 since Gabriel, seated
On this mat by my side,
 where now the maiden reposes,
Told me this same sad tale;
 then arose and continued his journey!”

Soft was the voice of the priest,
and he spake with an accent of kindness;
But on Evangeline's heart fell his words
as in winter the snowflakes
Fall into some lone nest
from which the birds have departed.
"Far to the north he has gone,"
continued the priest; "but in autumn,
When the chase is done,
will return again to the Mission."
Then Evangeline said,
and her voice was meek and submissive:
"Let me remain with thee,
for my soul is sad and afflicted."
So seemed it wise and well unto all;
and betimes on the morrow,
Mounting his Mexican steed,
with his Indian guides and companions,
Homeward Basil returned,
and Evangeline stayed at the Mission.

Slowly, slowly, slowly,
the days succeeded each other,—

Days and weeks and months; and
the fields of maize that were springing
Green from the ground when a stranger
she came, now waving above her,



Lifted their slender shafts,
with leaves interlacing, and forming
Cloisters for mendicant crows
and granaries pillaged by squirrels
Then in the golden weather
the maize was husked, and the maidens

Blushed at each blood-red ear,
 for that betokened a lover,
But at the crooked laughed,
 and called it a thief in the corn-field.
Even the blood-red ear
 to Evangeline brought not her lover.
“Patience!” the priest would say; “have
 faith, and thy prayer will be answered!
Look at this delicate plant
 that lifts its head from the meadow,
See how its leaves all point to the north,
 as true as the magnet;
It is the compass-flower,
 that the finger of God has suspended
Here on its fragile stalk,
 to direct the traveller’s journey
Over the sea-like, pathless,
 limitless waste of the desert.
Such in the soul of man is faith.
 The blossoms of passion,
Gay and luxuriant flowers,
 are brighter and fuller of fragrance.
But they beguile us, and lead us astray,
 and their odor is deadly.

Only this humble plant
 can guide us here, and hereafter
Crown us with asphodel flowers,
 that are wet with the dews of nepenthe."



So came the autumn, and passed,
 and the winter,—yet Gabriel came not;
Blossomed the opening spring,
 and the notes of the robin and blue-bird

Sounded sweet upon wold and in wood,
yet Gabriel came not.
But on the breath of the summer winds
a rumor was wafted
Sweeter than song of bird,
or hue or odor of blossom.
Far to the north and east,
it said, in the Michigan forests,
Gabriel had his lodge
by the banks of the Saginaw river.
And, with returning guides,
that sought the lakes of St. Lawrence,
Saying a sad farewell,
Evangeline went from the Mission.
When over weary ways,
by long and perilous marches,
She had attained at length
the depths of the Michigan forests,
Found she the hunter's lodge deserted
and fallen to ruin!

Thus did the long sad years glide on,
and in seasons and places

Divers and distant far
 was seen the wandering maiden;—
Now in the Tents of Grace
 of the meek Moravian Missions,



Now in the noisy camps
 and the battle-fields of the army,
Now in secluded hamlets,
 in towns and populous cities.
Like a phantom she came,
 and passed away unremembered.

Fair was she and young,
 when in hope began the long journey;
Faded was she and old,
 when in disappointment it ended.
Each succeeding year
 stole something away from her beauty,
Leaving behind it, broader and deeper,
 the gloom and the shadow.
Then there appeared and spread
 faint streaks of grey o'er her forehead,
Dawn of another life,
 that broke o'er her earthly horizon,
As in the eastern sky
 the first faint streaks of the morning.

V.

In that delightful land which is washed
 by the Delaware's waters,
Guarding in sylvan shades
 the name of Penn the apostle,
Stands on the banks of its beautiful stream
 the city he founded.
There all the air is balm,
 and the peach is the emblem of beauty,

And the streets still re-echo
the names of the trees of the forest,
As if they fain would appease
the Dryads whose haunts they molested.
There from the troubled sea
had Evangeline landed, an exile,
Finding among the children of Penn
a home and a country.
There old René Leblanc had died;
and when he departed
Saw at his side only one
of all his hundred descendants.
Something at least there was
in the friendly streets of the city,
Something that spake to her heart,
and made her no longer a stranger;
And her ear was pleased
with the Thee and Thou of the Quakers,
For it recalled the past,
the old Acadian country,
Where all men were equal,
and all were brothers and sisters.
So, when the fruitless search,
the disappointed endeavor,

Ended, to recommence no more
 upon earth, uncomplaining,
Thither, as leaves to the light, were
 turned her thoughts and her footsteps.



As from a mountain's top
 the rainy mists of the morning
Roll away, and afar we behold
 the landscape below us,

So was her love diffused,
but, like to some odorous spices,
Suffered no waste nor loss,
though filling the air with aroma.



Other hope had she none,
nor wish in life but to follow
Meekly, with reverent steps,
the sacred feet of her Saviour.
Thus many years she lived
as a Sister of Mercy; frequenting

Lonely and wretched roofs
 in the crowded lanes of the city,
Where distress and want
 concealed themselves from the sunlight,
Where disease and sorrow
 in garrets languished neglected.
Night after night, when the world
 was asleep, as the watchman repeated
Loud, through the gusty streets,
 that all was well in the city,
High at some lonely window
 he saw the light of her taper.
Day after day, in the grey of the dawn,
 as slow through the suburbs
Plodded the German farmer,
 with flowers and fruits for the market,
Met he that meek, pale face,
 returning home from its watchings.

Then it came to pass
 that a pestilence fell on the city,
Presaged by wondrous signs,
 and mostly by flocks of wild pigeons,

Darkening the sun in their flight,
 with naught in their craws but an acorn.
And, as the tides of the sea arise
 in the month of September,
Flooding some silver stream,
 till it spreads to a lake in the meadow,
So death flooded life,
 and, o'erflowing its natural margin,
Spread to a brackish lake
 the silver stream of existence.
Wealth had no power to bribe,
 nor beauty to charm, the oppressor;
But all perished alike
 beneath the scourge of his anger;—
Only, alas! the poor,
 who had neither friends nor attendants,
Crept away to die in the almshouse,
 home of the homeless.
Then in the suburbs it stood, in the midst
 of meadows and woodlands;—
Now the city surrounds it; but still,
 with its gateway and wicket
Meek, in the midst of splendor,
 its humble walls seem to echo

Softly the words of the Lord:

“The poor ye always have with you.”

Thither, by night and by day,

came the Sister of Mercy. The dying

Looked up into her face, and thought,

indeed, to behold there

Gleams of celestial light

encircle her forehead with splendor,

Such as the artist paints

o'er the brows of saints and apostles,

Or such as hangs by night

o'er a city seen at a distance.

Unto their eyes it seemed

the lamps of the city celestial,

Into whose shining gates

ere long their spirits would enter.

Thus, on a Sabbath morn,

through the streets, deserted and silent,

Wending her quiet way,

she entered the door of the almshouse.

Sweet on the summer air

was the odor of flowers in the garden;



*Thither, by night and by day,
came the Sister of Mercy.*

And she paused on her way
to gather the fairest among them,
That the dying once more might rejoice
in their fragrance and beauty.



Then, as she mounted the stairs
to the corridors, cooled by the east wind,
Distant and soft on her ear fell the chimes
from the belfry of Christ Church,
While, intermingled with these,
across the meadows were wafted

Sounds of psalms, that were sung
by the Swedes in their church at Wicaco.
Soft as descending wings
fell the calm of the hour on her spirit;
Something within her said:
"At length thy trials are ended";
And, with light in her looks,
she entered the chambers of sickness.
Noiselessly moved about
the assiduous, careful attendants,
Moistening the feverish lip
and the aching brow, and in silence
Closing the sightless eyes of the dead,
and concealing their faces,
Where on their pallets they lay,
like drifts of snow by the roadside.
Many a languid head,
upraised as Evangeline entered,
Turned on its pillow of pain
to gaze while she passed, for her presence
Fell on their hearts like a ray
of the sun on the walls of a prison.
And, as she looked around,
she saw how Death, the consoler,

Laying his hand upon many a heart,
 had healed it for ever.
Many familiar forms had disappeared
 in the night-time;
Vacant their places were,
 or filled already by strangers.

Suddenly, as if arrested by fear
 or a feeling of wonder,
Still she stood, with her colorless lips apart,
 while a shudder
Ran through her frame, and, forgotten,
 the flowerets dropped from her fingers,
And from her eyes and cheeks
 the light and bloom of the morning.
Then there escaped from her lips
 a cry of such terrible anguish
That the dying heard it,
 and started up from their pillows.
On the pallet before her
 was stretched the form of an old man;
Long, and thin, and grey
 were the locks that shaded his temples;

But, as he lay in the morning light,
his face for a moment
Seemed to assume once more
the forms of its earlier manhood;



So are wont to be changed
the faces of those who are dying.
Hot and red on his lips
still burned the flush of the fever,
As if life, like the Hebrew,
with blood had besprinkled its portals,

That the Angel of Death
 might see the sign and pass over.
Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay,
 and his spirit, exhausted,
Seemed to be sinking down
 through infinite depths in the darkness,
Darkness of slumber and death,
 for ever sinking and sinking.
Then through those realms of shade,
 in multiplied reverberations,
Heard he that cry of pain,
 and through the hush that succeeded
Whispered a gentle voice,
 in accents tender and saint-like:
"Gabriel! O my beloved,"
 and died away into silence.
Then he beheld, in a dream,
 once more the home of his childhood,
Green Acadian meadows,
 with sylvan rivers among them,
Village, and mountain, and woodlands;
 and, walking under their shadow,
As in the days of her youth,
 Evangeline rose in his vision.

Tears came into his eyes;
and, as slowly he lifted his eyelids,
Vanished the vision away,
but Evangeline knelt by his bedside.
Vainly he strove to whisper her name,
for the accents unuttered



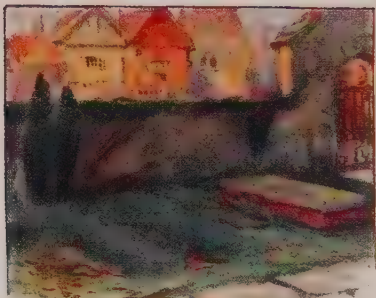
Died on his lips, and their motion revealed
what his tongue would have spoken.
Vainly he strove to rise;
and Evangeline, kneeling beside him,



*Vainly he strove
to whisper her name.*

Kissed his dying lips,
 and laid his head on her bosom.
Sweet was the light of his eyes;
 but it suddenly sank into darkness,
As when a lamp is blown out
 by a gust of wind at a casement.
All was ended now, the hope,
 and the fear, and the sorrow,
All the aching of heart,
 the restless, unsatisfied longing,
All the dull, deep pain,
 and constant anguish of patience!
And, as she pressed once more
 the lifeless head to her bosom,
Meekly she bowed her own,
 and murmured: "Father, I thank thee!"





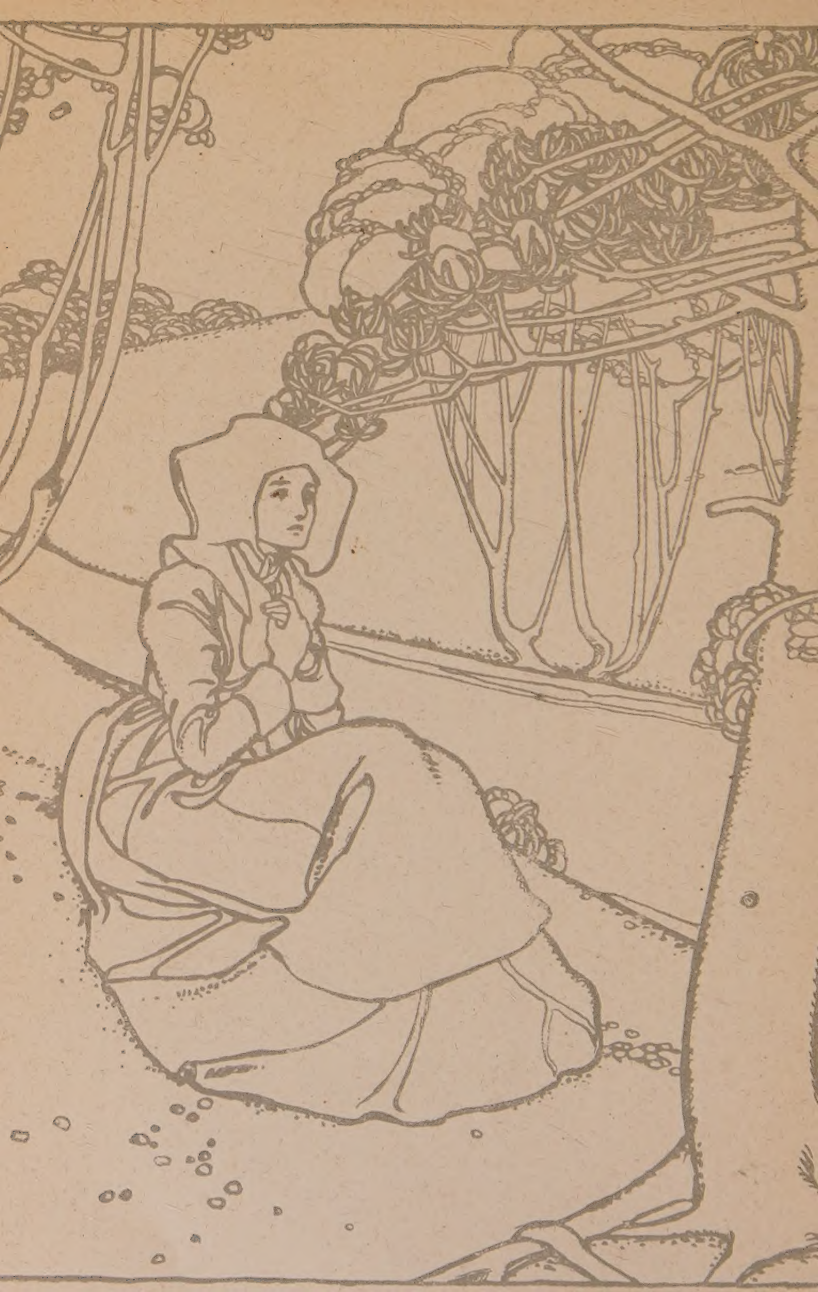
STILL stands the forest primeval;
 but far away from its shadow,
Side by side, in their nameless graves,
 the lovers are sleeping.
Under the humble walls
 of the little Catholic churchyard,
In the heart of the city, they lie,
 unknown and unnoticed.
Daily the tides of life go
 ebbing and flowing beside them,

Thousands of throbbing hearts,
 where theirs are at rest and for ever,
Thousands of aching brains,
 where theirs no longer are busy,
Thousands of toiling hands, where
 theirs have ceased from their labors,
Thousands of weary feet, where
 theirs have completed their journey!

Still stands the forest primeval;
 but under the shade of its branches
Dwells another race,
 with other customs and language.
Only along the shore
 of the mournful and misty Atlantic
Linger a few Acadian peasants,
 whose fathers from exile
Wandered back to their native land
 to die in its bosom.
In the fisherman's cot the wheel
 and the loom are still busy;
Maidens still wear their Norman caps
 and their kirtles of homespun,

And by the evening fire
repeat Evangeline's story,
While from its rocky caverns
the deep-voiced, neighboring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate
answers the wail of the forest.

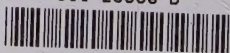






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